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Standards for Diocesan Natural Family Planning Ministry

*Administrative Committee of the
United States Conference of Catholic Bishops*

UNITED STATES CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS
WASHINGTON, D.C.

The mandate of the Diocesan Development Program for Natural Family Planning (DDP/NFP) of the bishops' Committee for Pro-Life Activities is to provide nationwide leadership, coordination, and assistance for the Catholic dioceses in the United States in the development of consistently strong diocesan Natural Family Planning (NFP) programs. In fulfillment of its responsibilities as a program of the Secretariat for Pro-Life Activities, the DDP/NFP in conjunction with NFP experts, has developed the *Standards for Diocesan Natural Family Planning Ministry*. Originally issued in 1990, these revised standards were approved by the Administrative Committee of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops at its September 2000 meeting. It is authorized for publication by the undersigned.

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Introduction

Helping couples to deepen conjugal love and achieve responsible parenthood is part of the Church's total pastoral ministry to Catholic spouses. Fulfillment of this ministry includes both education and pastoral care. This means "instilling conviction and offering practical help to those who wish to live out their parenthood in a truly responsible way" (*Familiaris Consortio*, #35). Diocesan NFP services must be based on the Church's doctrine and moral teaching, as well as on the accumulated wisdom of the sciences. Concretely, diocesan Natural Family Planning (hereafter NFP) ministry involves the following:

- Instruction on human fertility and procreation including a fundamental education of the fertility cycle and how to interpret the physiological signs of fertility
- A process for enabling couples to understand motivation and other factors which affect their decision making with regard to responsible parenthood
- Formation in recognizing the value of moral commitment and spirituality that reinforce the human decision while integrating wholesome attitudes toward parenting and family life.

To help couples become proficient and secure in using NFP, dioceses must provide competent NFP services. Such services should call upon the laity (e.g., married couples), religious, clergy (especially married permanent deacons), medical specialists, and experts in related fields who have developed expertise in teaching and encouraging couples to use NFP effectively.

These *Standards for Diocesan Natural Family Planning Ministry* (hereafter *Standards*) have grown out of a sense of need on the part of diocesan leaders for a nationally consistent, systematic training of diocesan NFP teachers. At the same time, the *Standards* are also guides for the development of diocesan NFP ministry. They describe the basic program components for strong NFP ministry and set the expectations as to what knowledge and skills the NFP teachers should have as they work within their dioceses.

As a ministry of the local Church's efforts directed to married and engaged couples, diocesan NFP services are unique because they provide competent NFP education within the context of Catholic moral and sacramental teaching on human sexuality, marriage and family life. Within the NFP community, a variety of methods and schools exist. This often results in differently trained NFP teachers ministering in the same diocese. Indeed, it is "providential," says Pope John Paul II, that "diverse methods of NFP exist" (July 3, 1982). The bishops of the United States in their pastoral plan for diocesan NFP services also call for the "availability of all methods within the diocese" (1981). "The Holy Father urges all in this apostolate to avoid limiting their efforts to only one approach, and also to avoid anything that will detract from a commitment to NFP" (Cardinal Terence Cooke, July 18, 1983).

While emphatically a gift, such diversity also presents a challenge: how to support and evaluate the variety of methodologies and approaches to client education, in addition to the competency of individual teachers?

The *Standards* provide the local bishop with an objective instrument for that purpose. The *Standards* also serve as a blueprint for diocesan program growth and activities which also includes outreach education to appropriate groups in the local Church (see page 8, items I and O).

These *Standards* were developed by the Diocesan Development Program for Natural Family Planning (hereafter DDP) which provides national leadership and assistance in NFP for U.S. Catholic dioceses. The DDP was assisted in this effort by NFP experts and leaders.

I. Standards for Diocesan NFP Ministry

Diocesan NFP ministry provides instruction in natural methods of fertility regulation and education on related issues. It is integrated into the structure of the diocese, with an NFP coordinator appointed by the bishop and having NFP teachers who are accountable to and work in cooperation with the NFP coordinator. The primary focus of diocesan NFP ministry is to provide quality NFP services to married and engaged couples.

To achieve Endorsement under the *Standards*, diocesan NFP ministry will have the following components:

- A. A statement of program philosophy, goals, and objectives which include acceptance and promotion of Catholic teaching on human sexuality, marriage and family life, conjugal love and responsible parenthood as articulated in major Church documents (see Appendix A on page 24 for required texts)

- B. Opportunities for NFP teachers and couples/clients to learn basic concepts of Catholic teaching, including
 - 1. In God's plan, marriage is a permanent, faithful, exclusive relationship between husband and wife, directed toward mutual sanctification, unity, and parenthood.
 - 2. Marriage is a sacrament, a sign of God's presence in the world, and a source of grace for the couple.
 - 3. The unifying factor between the spouses is conjugal love: that is, an interpersonal love between husband and wife that is mutually enriching, permanent, exclusive, faithful, total, and fruitful (open to life).
 - 4. Decisions regarding parenthood are primarily the responsibility of the couple, based on a recognition that human life is a sacred gift from God and that the transmission of human life and the socialization and education of children are both the privilege and prerogative of the married couple. Decisions about parenthood should be made by the couple in a spirit of love and generosity, in light of their responsibilities to God, to themselves, to their children already born, and to society in accordance with a properly formed conscience.
 - 5. Sexual intercourse is part of God's plan to enable couples to intensify their mutual intimacy and to bring new life into the world. By God's design there is an inseparable connection between the two meanings of the act of intercourse: the love-giving (unitive) and the life-giving (procreative).
- C. Standards that meet or exceed the *Standards* of the bishops' conference

- D. A diocesan NFP coordinator who should maintain a lifestyle consistent with Catholic moral teaching, and who
1. accepts the teaching of the Church on human sexuality, conjugal love, responsible parenthood, marriage and family life (see Appendix A on page 24)
 2. uses and/or philosophically accepts NFP and does not use any form of contraception, nor refers couples/clients for contraception, sterilization, abortion, or reproductive techniques that separate the unitive and procreative nature of intercourse
 3. has basic knowledge of NFP methods
 4. has duties and responsibilities that include
 - a) promoting the diocesan NFP program philosophy, and implementing its goals and objectives
 - b) coordinating NFP services in the diocese
 - c) providing a format for NFP education in marriage preparation programs
 - d) implementing the *Standards* of the bishops' conference
 - e) recruiting and selecting potential NFP teachers
 - f) providing opportunities for diocesan NFP teacher training
 - g) overseeing the teacher Certification process of the bishops' conference
 - h) providing opportunities for continuing education for diocesan NFP teachers
 - i) fostering respect and promoting cooperation among NFP teachers and organizations
 - j) consulting with the diocesan NFP program advisory committee (see E on page 8)
 - k) attending the DDP conference or other NFP related conferences annually

- i) developing cooperative and effective working relationships with appropriate diocesan and community agencies
 - m) providing periodic assessment of diocesan NFP teachers
- E. An advisory committee that includes representatives of diocesan NFP teachers, NFP couples, and appropriate resource persons from throughout the diocese
- F. Teaching formats, curricula, and materials for couple/client education that conform to the *Standards* (see section III on page 13)
- G. A job description or list of specific duties for diocesan NFP teachers (see section II, E-P on pages 10 and 11)
- H. Accessible and affordable NFP services appropriate to the culture and language of the diocesan population
- I. Promotion of NFP, chastity, and fertility appreciation throughout the diocese, especially in programs of marriage preparation, clergy education, and adolescent sexuality education
- J. Medical, psychological, moral, spiritual, and educational resources available for teachers and couples/clients
- K. Activities that support and encourage NFP couples/clients in their use of NFP
- L. Record keeping that includes information to provide non-identifying statistical data to the DDP
- M. Periodic assessment of diocesan NFP services
- N. An annual meeting for all diocesan NFP teachers
- O. Resources and education for seminarians, religious, permanent deacons, and priests to enable them to support and encourage couples to use NFP
- P. Continuing education and enrichment for diocesan NFP teachers and couples/clients that may include information, resources, and discussion of Catholic teachings on human sexuality, marriage and family life, and NFP.

II. Standards for Diocesan NFP Teachers

A diocesan NFP teacher's primary role is to provide NFP instruction and follow-up to couples/clients. He or she conveys respect for each couple/client and promotes their autonomy in the use of NFP. By integrating Catholic teachings on human sexuality, marriage, and family life into their instruction, a diocesan NFP teacher encourages couples/clients to grow in their marital relationship. Diocesan NFP teachers are accountable to and work in cooperation with the diocesan NFP coordinator.

To achieve Certification under the *Standards*, a diocesan NFP teacher must attest to the fact that he or she

- A. Strives to maintain a lifestyle consistent with Catholic moral teaching
- B. Accepts and integrates in his or her teaching the principles of Catholic teaching on human sexuality, marriage and family life, conjugal love, and responsible parenthood (see Appendix A on page 24 for required texts)
- C. Uses and/or philosophically accepts NFP and not use any form of contraception.

The diocesan NFP teacher must also

- D. Complete a *Standards*-approved NFP teacher training program and the *Standards* certification process
- E. Meet the standards of the local diocesan NFP program and work in harmony with its policies and staff
- F. Be capable of teaching NFP as it pertains to all phases of the reproductive life cycle
- G. Use a diocesan-approved teaching format, curriculum, and materials (see section III on page 13)
- H. Use effective teaching and communication techniques
- I. Be proficient in teaching at least one method of NFP
- J. Demonstrate respect for other NFP methods and willingness to refer couples/clients to them when appropriate
- K. Maintain client confidentiality
- L. Not recommend or refer couples/clients for contraception, sterilization, abortion, or reproductive techniques that separate the unitive and procreative nature of intercourse
- M. Demonstrate respect for couples/clients
- N. Have a basic knowledge of couple communication skills and family dynamics as they relate to teaching NFP
- O. Understand the physical, emotional, and spiritual aspects of human sexuality

P. Ensure program quality by

1. providing instruction and follow-up in accordance with the standards of the local diocesan program
2. maintaining confidential client records concerning personal background, instruction, and follow-up, in accordance with the local diocesan NFP program
3. cooperating with the local diocesan NFP program's periodic assessment of its teachers
4. providing data for the periodic diocesan report to the DDP
5. attending annually at least one NFP educational function sponsored by the local diocesan NFP program
6. participating in appropriate continuing education and ongoing self-evaluation
7. committing to an initial service period with subsequent offers to teach and provide follow-up for a minimum number of couples/clients or classes per year.

III. Standards for Diocesan NFP Couple/Client Education

Diocesan NFP couple/client education includes instruction on NFP methodology and Catholic teaching on human sexuality, conjugal love, responsible parenthood, marriage, and family life. It includes follow-up during and after formal instruction until the couple/client achieves autonomy. It is adapted to the particular needs and circumstances of the couple/client.

Diocesan NFP couple/client education

- A. Is provided in at least four client contact sessions, two of which include individual follow-up with chart review, over a time span of six or more months

B. Includes the following content:

1. a process for integrating Catholic teaching regarding human sexuality, the sacrament of marriage, conjugal love, responsible parenthood, and its application to the couple's lifestyle
2. a presentation of couple fertility that describes the reproductive anatomy and physiology of the male and the female, including the role of basal body temperature, cervical mucus, cervical changes, and other symptoms of the female fertility cycle
3. instruction on observing, charting, and interpreting the sign(s) of fertility on a day-by-day basis so as to correctly identify the days and patterns of fertility and infertility
4. the guidelines for both achieving and avoiding pregnancy
5. the teaching of abstinence from genital contact and sexual intercourse during the fertile phase of the cycle as the means to avoid pregnancy
6. an explanation of the importance of the couple's
 - a) motivation and communication
 - b) ongoing discussion of their family planning intention
 - c) acceptance of their combined fertility
7. a discussion of factors that may affect the interpretation of the sign(s) of fertility (e.g., stress, illness, medication, etc.)
8. emphasis on the need for additional instruction or referral for special situations such as difficulties in achieving pregnancy or anovulatory patterns that may result from breast-feeding or perimenopause, chemical and/or mechanical contraceptive use, or miscarriage/abortion
9. discussion of the benefits of NFP

- C. Consists of follow-up which has
 - 1. at least two personal chart reviews with appropriate documentation
 - 2. appropriate follow-up contacts until the couple/client reaches autonomy
 - 3. assessment of the couple/client's progress in
 - a) observing, correctly charting, and interpreting daily the sign(s) of fertility
 - b) recognizing and understanding the days of fertility and infertility in the cycle and any change in the fertility pattern
 - c) following method instruction according to their family planning intention
 - d) integrating periodic abstinence in their lives
 - e) gaining confidence in and satisfaction with their use of NFP
 - 4. pregnancies recorded and classified
 - 5. discontinuation of instruction prior to autonomy recorded
 - 6. appropriate medical, psychological, educational, social services or pastoral referrals as needed.

IV. Standards for NFP Teacher Training Programs

A *Standards*-approved NFP teacher training program may be local, regional, or national. It will use a formal curriculum and maintain competent faculty. It will provide a supervised practicum, including an objective evaluation of its trainees' knowledge and teaching skills.

To achieve Approval an NFP teacher training program will include the following:

A. Philosophy and Catholic teaching

1. Catholic teachings on human sexuality, marriage and family life, conjugal love, responsible parenthood, and the proper formation of conscience (see Appendix A on page 24 for required texts)
2. the necessity for respecting all NFP methodologies

- B. Natural Family Planning instruction**
 - 1. historical overview of the natural methods of family planning
 - 2. scientific effectiveness of NFP
 - 3. male/female reproductive anatomy and physiology and basic information on the prenatal development of the human person
 - 4. fertility signs, including the role of basal body temperature, cervical mucus, cervical changes, and other symptoms of the female fertility cycle
 - 5. observing, charting, and interpreting the sign(s) of fertility appropriate to the specific NFP methodology
 - 6. instructions on achieving and avoiding pregnancy, including the teaching of abstinence from genital contact and sexual intercourse during the fertile phase of the cycle as the means of avoiding pregnancy
 - 7. instruction on all phases of the reproductive life cycle and special circumstances
 - 8. instruction on follow-up procedures and couple/client autonomy
- C. Education about contraception, sterilization, abortion, and reproductive technologies**
- D. Marriage and family life education**
 - 1. the couple/client's need for communication, growth in their marriage relationship, and the integration of periodic abstinence into their lives
 - 2. information on current trends in marriage, family life, and fertility in U.S. society

E. Teaching and communication skills

1. an understanding of the proper role and limitations of the NFP teacher, emphasizing the need for ongoing self-evaluation
2. basic communication and problem-solving skills, as well as the ability to recognize when to make referrals and the process for doing so
3. compassion, tact, discretion, confidentiality, and patience in teaching and follow-up
4. principles of the teaching/learning process and characteristics of the adult learner
5. use of a variety of educational and class planning strategies

F. Program management

1. a couple/client education program that includes the items under section III (see pages 13-15)
2. rationales and instruction for record keeping, confidentiality, and program management
3. promotion of cooperation with diocesan NFP programs and the DDP
4. information on strategies for recruiting clients, community outreach, and public relations

G. Faculty and facilities

1. faculty who are competent in their area of expertise
2. experienced, certified NFP teachers with current knowledge of NFP method(s)
3. facilities that include comfortable learning environments, appropriate audio-visual equipment, and necessary reference materials for faculty and teacher candidates

H. Teacher evaluation

1. administration of objective tests and other appropriate means that evaluate the teacher candidate's knowledge of NFP and their ability to apply it to specific client situations
2. a supervised practicum consisting of
 - a) an assigned supervisor to the teacher candidate
 - b) the teacher candidate teaching at least six couples/clients, with follow-up, for a minimum duration of six months
 - c) ongoing guidance, assessment, evaluation, and documentation of the teacher candidate's progress by the supervisor

I. Teacher training program evaluation

1. periodic evaluation of the curriculum by the faculty
2. evaluation of the teacher/learning process by the teacher candidates.

Glossary

Achieving/Avoiding Pregnancy

- Achieving: Couples using NFP to become pregnant
- Avoiding: Couples using NFP to space or limit pregnancy. A couple who is *spacing* desires more children at some future time, but currently desires to postpone pregnancy. A couple who is *limiting* desires no more pregnancies.

Autonomy

The accurate identification of the beginning and end of the woman's fertile phase, and the couple's confident use of this knowledge to direct their sexual behavior to correspond with their family planning intention.

Confidentiality

A professional ethic that protects the privacy of clients. Confidentiality prevents the disclosure of personal information to any third party outside the realm of NFP instruction without the client's prior written authorization.

Conscience

"Moral conscience, present at the heart of the person, enjoins him at the appropriate moment to do good and to avoid evil. It also judges particular choices, approving those that are good and denouncing those that are evil." (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, #1777)

"The education of the conscience is a lifelong task. . . In the formation of conscience the Word of God is the light for our path; we must assimilate it in faith and prayer and put it into practice. . . We are assisted by the gifts of the Holy Spirit, aided by the witness or advice of others and guided by the authoritative teaching of the Church." (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, ## 1784 & 1785)

Couple/Client Contact	Teacher-client interaction for the purpose of instruction and/or follow-up. Ideally this interaction should occur face to face. Given geographic and time constraints, other means such as mail, phone, fax, and e-mail may be used to facilitate teacher-client feedback.
Diocesan NFP Advisory Committee	An advisory committee that includes representative diocesan NFP teachers, NFP couples, and appropriate resource persons from throughout the diocese.
Diocesan NFP Coordinator	The person appointed by the bishop to coordinate and promote NFP in the diocese.
Diocesan NFP Couple/Client Education	Diocesan NFP couple/client education includes instruction on NFP methodology and the Church's teachings on human sexuality, conjugal love, and responsible parenthood. It includes follow-up during and after formal instruction until the couple/client achieves autonomy. It is adapted to the particular needs and circumstances of the couple/client.
Diocesan NFP Ministry	Diocesan NFP ministry provides instruction in natural methods of fertility regulation and education on related issues. It is integrated into the structure of the diocese, with an NFP coordinator appointed by the bishop. The primary focus of the diocesan NFP program is to provide quality NFP services to married and engaged couples.
Diocesan NFP Teacher	A diocesan NFP teacher's primary role is to provide NFP instruction and follow-up to couples/clients. He or she conveys respect for each couple/client and promotes their autonomy in the use of NFP. By integrating Catholic teachings on human sexuality, marriage, and family life in their

instruction, a diocesan NFP teacher encourages couples/clients to grow in their marital relationship. Diocesan NFP teachers are accountable to and work in cooperation with the diocesan NFP coordinator.

Natural Family Planning

Methods for achieving and avoiding pregnancy that are based on the observation of the naturally occurring signs and symptoms of the fertile and infertile phases of the menstrual cycle.

Couples using natural family planning methods to avoid pregnancy abstain from intercourse and genital contact during the fertile phase of the woman's cycle. No drugs, devices, or surgical procedures are used to avoid pregnancy.

NFP reflects the dignity of the human person within the context of marriage and family life, and promotes openness to life and the gift of the child. By complementing the love-giving and life-giving nature of marriage, NFP can enrich the bond between husband and wife.

Family

"A man and a woman united in marriage, together with their children, form a family. This institution is prior to any recognition by public authority, which has an obligation to recognize it. It should be considered the normal reference point by which the different forms of family relationship are to be evaluated." (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, #2202)

"The family . . . is a community of persons: of husband and wife, of parents and children, of relatives. Its first task is to live . . . to develop an authentic community of persons." (*Familiaris consortio*, #18)

Appendix A: Required Church Documents

Church teachings on human sexuality, conjugal love, responsible parenthood, and marriage and family life are especially contained in the following twentieth-century documents.

- *Evangelium vitae* (1995)
- *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (1994)
- *Donum vitae* (1987)
- *Familiaris consortio* (1980)
- *Humanae vitae* (1968)
- *Gaudium et spes* (1965)
- *Casti connubii* (1930)

Appendix B: The *Standards*— A History of the Project

In March 1981 the Administrative Committee of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops (NCCB) established the Diocesan Development Program for Natural Family Planning (DDP) as a program of the Secretariat for Pro-Life Activities. Cardinal Terence Cooke, then chairman of the Committee for Pro-Life Activities, urged this action. During the Synod of Bishops in October 1980, Cardinal Cooke became convinced that the family apostolate must be given priority:

At that world Synod, I was impressed with the variety of family structures in the different nations and cultures, with the similarity of problems that families face, with the contributions that families can make in ministering to one another, and with the importance of the Church's teaching and its pastoral care of

families. (Cardinal Terence Cooke, address at The Catholic University of America, Washington, D.C., July 18, 1983)

Acting upon this, and with Cardinal Cooke's encouragement, the bishops of the United States appointed Msgr. James T. McHugh of the Archdiocese of Newark as director. He then began to assist dioceses in implementing the Church's teachings on conjugal love and responsible parenthood, assisted by Dr. Mary Catherine Martin. They took a systematic approach in helping dioceses to expand the availability of NFP services to the local Catholic community. Today, NFP services are found within various diocesan structures, e.g. departments in and of themselves, part of family life offices, components of Catholic Charities, or as Catholic hospital programs.

Having national standards for diocesan NFP ministry was formally recommended by diocesan NFP coordinators meeting at Seton Hall University in July 1987. They called attention to the fact that the need for national standardization of diocesan NFP ministry and teachers had been a common concern in the diocesan NFP community. At that conference, participants joined in a full discussion of the project. They anticipated possible problems: How would diocesan ministry be evaluated? How could one process cover the different training programs and philosophies of all NFP provider groups? On the benefit side, they identified: teachers certified in one diocese would not have to be retrained for another; unity would arise among diocesan NFP teachers; and diocesan NFP services would be viewed with greater credibility.

The participants asked for a committee to be appointed to study the best approach to developing standards for diocesan NFP ministry, and asked Msgr. McHugh to select committee members. Aided by DDP Assistant Director, Rev. Philip Kraus, S.J., NFPP, within six months of the 1987 conference invitations to join the committee were sent to ten NFP diocesan coordinators, experts, and consultants (Stephen Burke, MSW, Providence; Carmela Cavero, MS, CNM, San Diego; Donna

Dausman, Springfield, IL; Rose Fuller, Portland, OR; Robert T. Kambic, Baltimore; Mary Catherine Martin, PhD, St. Louis; Jay Paulukonis, MSLs, Sioux Falls; Mary Ann Stanton, Cleveland; C. James Statt, MD, Phoenix; and Mary Pat Van Epps, Memphis).

The certification committee began its work in January 1988. It defined priorities, articulated tasks, agreed on a schedule, and identified sub-committees which would meet between plenary meetings: human reproduction and NFP methodology; Church teachings; marriage and family life; teaching and communication skills; diocesan program development. The sub-committee on methodology prepared the first draft of the *Standards*. This draft was first discussed by the committee during its June 1988 meeting. It served as the working document, and all other sub-committee work was integrated into it.

The certification committee elicited ongoing consultation informally from diocesan NFP coordinators and representatives of national NFP provider groups. The final plenary committee meeting (April 6-8, 1989, Newark, NJ), synthesized this input and revised the working document. The committee decided to mail the revised document to diocesan NFP coordinators and NFP providers asking them for feedback. They also would present it for additional scrutiny to participants at the forthcoming national conference of diocesan NFP Coordinators in June 1989.

Meeting again at Seton Hall University, diocesan NFP coordinators provided the certification committee with recommendations for refining the *Standards* draft based on their experience. The approximately 160 participants included representatives from 18 archdioceses, 50 dioceses, and all of the national NFP providers. The remaining numbers represented a good sampling of the many autonomous NFP organizations.

At a plenary meeting on November 2-5, 1989, in St. Louis, MO, the certification committee carefully considered all conference recommendations as well as written critiques by national NFP providers and

diocesan coordinators. Several significant changes were accepted. Most notable perhaps was a reorganization of the content. Draft sections concerning teacher evaluation and implementation were removed from the document, to be included in a companion workbook. The rationale: that evaluation and implementation are elements of a continuing process, not part of fixed standards. This final draft was mailed to all bishops for their editorial comments. Suggestions regarding the importance of including a standard on NFP outreach education to seminarians, religious, permanent deacons, and priests as well as chastity information to adolescents were submitted and accepted.

The *Standards* cover the following areas: I. Diocesan NFP Ministry; II. Diocesan NFP Teachers; III. Diocesan NFP Couple/Client Education; and IV. NFP Teacher Training Programs. The language is specific and was chosen so as to be easily understood by anyone reading the document. The *Standards* respect the authority of the local bishop and the integrity of the local diocesan NFP ministry. They are not intended to provide specific answers to all situations that might be encountered when establishing diocesan NFP ministry and providing NFP services. They are intended to provide a framework within which a conscientious response to such situations can be formulated.

The bishops are indebted to many people for the design and development of this important document. We are especially grateful to the Knights of Columbus for their outstanding support of marriage and family life. The Order's generous grant to the bishops for the purpose of NFP education and activity has enabled projects such as this to be realized. With regard to the 1990 document, gratitude is also extended to: Diane Daly, American Academy of NFP; Thomas W. Hilgers, M.D., Pope Paul VI Institute for the Study of Human Reproduction; R. Patrick Homan, the Couple to Couple League; Hanna Klaus, M.D., NFP Center of Washington, D.C., Inc.; Mercedes Wilson, Family of the Americas Foundation, Inc.; numerous diocesan coordinators; and the participants of the 1989 National Conference of Diocesan NFP Coordinators.

This edition, revised in 2000, is the result of ten years of experience in helping diocesan NFP coordinators implement the *Standards*. During 1999, the NFP National Advisory Board (Donna Dausman, Springfield, IL; Kay Ek, St. Cloud; Richard J. Fehring, DNSc, RN, Milwaukee; Janet Kistler, Phoenix; Stella Kitchen, Harrisburg; and Mary Pat Van Epps, Memphis) refined the *Standards* in light of the experience gleaned from reviewing diocesan NFP programs. It was approved by the Administrative Board of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops on September 12, 2000.

Appendix C: Implementation of the Standards

These standards are intended for use in Catholic dioceses in the United States. There are three systems for implementing the *Standards*: Endorsement for diocesan NFP ministry; Certification for diocesan NFP teachers; and Approval for NFP teacher training programs. Only diocesan NFP programs can apply for ministry Endorsement. Diocesan NFP teachers must apply for Certification through their diocesan NFP office. Any NFP teacher training program can apply for Approval.

Resources for the implementation of the *Standards* include forms, a workbook, and an assigned board of review. To begin the process of Endorsement the local bishop should appoint a diocesan NFP coordinator and write to the DDP requesting that all appropriate materials be sent to that person. The DDP staff will then contact the diocesan NFP coordinator to begin the process. The Certification process can begin at the same time as the Endorsement process; however, Certification will not be awarded to diocesan teachers until the diocesan program has achieved Endorsement.

Directors of NFP teacher training programs who are interested in meeting the *Standards* are encouraged to contact the DDP directly: Diocesan Development Program for Natural Family Planning, 3211 4th Street, NE, Washington, D.C. 20017-1194; 202-541-3240.